

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-12

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S E C R E T USNATO 04374

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TAGS: PORG, MILI, EU, XF, XG, XI
SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN,
DECEMBER 1977-APRIL 1978: TALKING POINTS FOR NAC DISCUSSION

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REFS: (A) USNATO 4190 (DTG 251150Z APR 78), (B) STATE 90640
(DTG 080122Z APR 78), (C) USNATO 3778 (DTG 131809Z APR 78),
(D) USNATO 3018 (DTG 221657Z MAR 78), (E) USNATO 4309
(DTG 271702Z APR 78)

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1. THIS CABLE FORWARDS COMMENTS AND PROPOSED TALKING POINTS
FOR AMBASSADOR TO USE WHEN THE "REPORT ON THE SITUATION
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN DECEMBER 1977-APRIL 1978" (MED REPORT)
IS REVIEWED IN THE NAC ON MAY 10 (REF A). ACTION REQUESTED:
SEE PARA 5.

2. THE HELPFUL WASHINGTON GUIDANCE IN REF B ON INITIAL
DRAFT OF REPORT (REF D) HAS FOR THE MOST PART BEEN INCOR-
PORATED INTO CURRENT VERSION OF THE REPORT (REF A).
FURTHER MODIFICATIONS OF THE TEXT ARE NOT NORMALLY MADE AT
THE TIME OF THE NAC REVIEW, BUT COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS
ARE MADE ORALLY BY THE PREMREPS AS THEY CONSIDER THE
REPORT. THESE COMMENTS THEN BECOME PART OF THE RECORD ON
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THE REPORT.

3. WASHINGTON MAY WISH TO KEEP THE FOLLOWING FACTORS IN
MIND IN REVIEWING THE DRAFT REPORT AND THE SUGGESTED
TALKING POINTS:

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(A) WASHINGTON GUIDANCE PARA 3B, REF B, REGARDING THE

SOVIET-SYRIAN ARMS RELATIONSHIP REFERS TO THE "SIGNING OF A NEW AGREEMENT AT THE END OF 1977". SEVERAL DELEGATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE UK, ARGUED STRONGLY DURING THE APRIL 11-13 DISCUSSION THAT, WHILE THEY HAD HEARD REPORTS OF THE AGREEMENT, THEY HAD NO EVIDENCE TO VERIFY THAT IT HAD ACTUALLY BEEN SIGNED. ACCORDINGLY, LESS DEFINITIVE WORDING WAS ADOPTED (PARA 12 OF TEXT TRANSMITTED REF A). IF EVIDENCE IS FIRM, WASHINGTON MAY WISH TO PROVIDE TALKING POINT SAYING SO.

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(B) WE THINK IT ADVISABLE TO STRESS AGAIN AT THE MAY 10 NAC OUR CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET EFFORTS TO GAIN ACCESS TO MEDITERRANEAN PORTS (REFS B AND D) EVEN THOUGH PERMREPS AT THE APRIL 26 PRIVATE MEETING DID DISCUSS ITALIAN PROBLEM (REF E). ITALIANS MORE OR LESS INVITED US TO RAISE ISSUE AGAIN DURING NAC DISCUSSION OF MED REPORT (REF C) AND IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO DO SO BECAUSE OF TUNISIAN DOCKYARD ISSUE. THERE WAS ALSO SOME DISCUSSION DURING THE APRIL 11-13 SESSIONS OF REPORTED SOVIET EFFORTS TO GAIN ACCESS TO SPANISH FACILITIES AND WE SUGGEST WASHINGTON PROVIDE US WHATEVER INFORMATION CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SHARE WITH THE ALLIES ON MAY 10.

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4. BEGIN TEXT OF PROPOSED TALKING POINTS:

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--WE APPROVE THE REPORT AND BELIEVE THAT ITS FOCUS ON
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SOVIET PENETRATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IS HIGHLY USEFUL AND IMPORTANT FOR THE ALLIANCE.

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--MY GOVERNMENT FINDS THIS REPORT OF PARTICULAR INTEREST BECAUSE OF OUR CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUED AND PERSISTENT SOVIET EFFORTS TO GAIN ACCESS TO MEDITERRANEAN PORT FACILITIES. WE HAVE EXPRESSED THIS CONCERN IN NATO ON OTHER OCCASIONS AND WISH TO REITERATE IT NOW.

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--IN OUR VIEW, ANY INCREASE IN THE CURRENT NUMBER OF AVAILABLE SHORE FACILITIES WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVED LEVEL OF SOVIET READINESS, REDUCE SOVIET AFLOAT SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS AND POSSIBLY PERMIT A HIGHER AVERAGE LEVEL OF SOVIET COMBATANTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

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--WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT FOR THE ALLIANCE TO MONITOR THIS PROBLEM CLOSELY AND TO TAKE WHAT STEPS ARE FEASIBLE AND APPROPRIATE TO COUNTER SOVIET EFFORTS IN THIS AREA. IN THIS REGARD, WE READ WITH INTEREST THE REPORT'S DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF SOVIET EFFORTS VIS-A-VIS THE TUNISIAN DOCKYARDS AS WELL AS THE REFERENCES TO WHAT WE BELIEVE WAS A USEFUL SERIES OF ALLIED DEMARCHES IN TUNIS. THESE

EXPRESSIONS OF ALLIED CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET ACCESS IN OUR
VIEW WERE PROBABLY A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN REDUCING THE
RATE OF ACCESS OF SOVIET SHIPS TO THE BIZERTE FACILITIES
IN 1978. END TEXT.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON APPROVAL AND COMMENTS ON
THE TALKING POINTS AS WELL AS ANY OTHER COMMENTS ON THE
REPORT ITSELF BY OOB MAY 10 OR EARLIER IF POSSIBLE.
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